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503.30414C14

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): KATO, et al.

Serial No.: 09/461,432

Filed: December 16, 1999

For: VACUUM PROCESSING APPARATUS AND OPERATING
METHOD THEREFOR

Group: 3749

Examiner: S. Gravini

Allowed: December 7, 2000

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Issue Fee
Washington, D.C. 20231

January 18, 2001

Sir:

Pursuant to Applicants' duty of disclosure, and also satisfying requirements of 37 CFR 1.56, submitted herewith are copies of two U.S. patents recently discovered by Applicants, to be considered in connection with the subject matter claimed in the above-identified application. Also enclosed, for convenience of the Examiner, is a List, on a form substantially equivalent to Form PTO-1449, including these two U.S. patents.

The submission of these two documents does not constitute an admission that these two documents constitute prior art in connection with the subject matter of the above-identified

application 09/461,432

01 FC:125 100.00 Connection with these two documents, attention is

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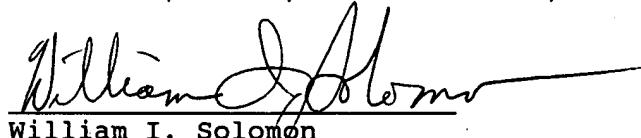
particularly directed to U.S. Patent No. 4,923,584. Note that in this U.S. patent, a whole cassette is provided within the load lock chamber. Moreover, the wafers have their orientation changed to a vertical position in the processing chamber, for the processing.

Consideration of the enclosed two U.S. patents, and indication thereof on the enclosed List; and, subsequent thereto, continued allowance of all claims in the application and passing of the above-identified application to issue in due course, are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414C14) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures